

moral reform for all within that state into
 which it had
 originally pleased God to call them. Yet the
 outbreak
 brought with it, frightening yet flattering, a
 strange tri-
 bute to his influence among the masses of
 his country-
 men—the famous letter of John Ball, the
 insurgent priest,
 to the men of Essex: 'John Schep, som tyme
 Seynt Marie
 prest of Yorke, and nowe of Colchestre,
 greteth welle
 Johan Nameles, and Johan the Mullere, and
 Johan Car-
 tere, and biddeth hem that thei ware of
 gyle in borugh,
 and stondeth togiddir in Goddis name, and
 biddeth Peres
 Ploughman go to his werke, and chastise
 welle Hobbe the
 robber, and taketh with you Johan Trewman,
 and alle his
 felaws, and no mo, and loke schappe you to
 one heued
 (shape you to one head, serve one leader),
 and no mo.

Johan the Muller hath ygrownde smal, smal,
 smal;
 The Kyngis sone of hevene shalle paye for alle.
 Be ware or (before) ye be wo,
 Knoweth your frende fro youre foo,
 Haveth ynowe, and scythe, Hoo (enough!);
 And do welle and bettre,⁹ and fleth synne,
 And seketh pees, and holde therynne.
 And so biddeth Johan Trewman and alle his
 felawes.'

In the same way it was those whom *Piers
 Plowman* had
 most denounced that were now marked out
 by the rebels
 for doom—prelates, lawyers, religious
 houses. The Arch-
 bishop of Canterbury was dragged from
 the Tower and

⁹Allusions to the visions, in the poem, of Do-well
 and Do-bet.
 It is interesting, as showing how natural and deep-
 rooted such
 allegory was in the popular mind of the Middle Ages,
 that a century

and a half later, when the poor weavers of another
rising, that of
1523, were asked by the Duke of Norfolk who their
leader was, one
John Green replied in exactly the same strain—*My
lord, since you
ask who is our captain, forsooth his name is Poverty,
for he and his
cousin Necessity have brought us to this doing/
(Hackett, *Henry*